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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Earth is what we all have in common.

– Wendell Berry, American novelist

I was on a short break in Perak a couple of years back when I witnessed an act that shocked me. A motorcycle with a pillion rider was riding in front of us and as we were driving over a river, the pillion rider conveniently threw a huge bag of garbage into the river and they rode off. Witnessing that opened my eyes to see that education on preserving Earth is crucial and an ongoing need.

Truly, Earth is the only thing we all have in common and it is all up to us to preserve and care for the planet that bonds us together.

Talks about environmentally friendly initiatives are constant but they're only effective if we take action. How can you get started?

It's not about spending a hefty amount on new reusable containers and cups. All you'll need to remember is to reduce, reuse and recycle! More importantly, be equipped with knowledge on this matter.

There are many ways for us to contribute to saving Earth and this 2023, let's get creative in the way we can help.

In conjunction with Earth Day happening this month, we've jumped on the bandwagon as we discuss all about the environment and planet Earth in 1Twenty80 this month. Flip through the pages to read articles you won't want to miss out on!

If you're on a mission to go green, like us, do remember to take it one step at a time. The key is to turn our lifestyle into an environmentally friendly one and not make it just a phase of life. Simple steps such as saying "No" to straws and having a bag of reusable containers in your car for you to grab during takeaway days are already impactful initiatives.

What are your environmentally friendly initiatives? Share with us and tag us on social media so that we can remind each other of this important step that we need to take. Together, we can help to preserve Earth.

Edeline

Kerjakan Fardu Puasa Dengan Selesa Dengan Ph-alkalizer

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25 MOULDY SPOTS TO WATCH OUT

Time for mould-busting!

By Isabel Andrew

Moulds aren't just eyesores but are potentially hazardous to your health!
They can appear in visible spots and obscure nooks and crooks of your homes and offices.
Here’s how you can go on mould-busting mode and catch these stealthy assassins in no time!

Where to check for mould:

BATHROOM

Where it grows:

- Shower head and bathtub.
- Shampoo bottle.
- Washcloths and loofah.
- Shower curtain.
- Tile grout.
- Faucet and sink.
- Toilet.
- Walls.
- Floor.

How to remove:

- Lower humidity levels by:
  - Using a ventilation fan during a shower and leave it on for at least 30 minutes after.
  - Using a dehumidifier or air conditioner.

- Clean and dry all surfaces.
- Check for water leakage.
- Change pipes and faucets often.

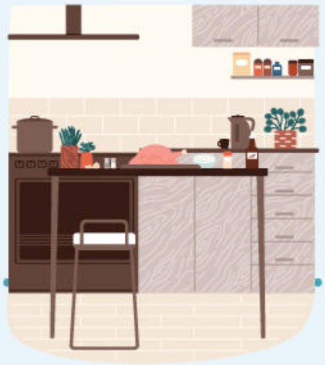
KITCHEN

Where it grows:

- Kitchen sink.
- Sponge holder.
- Wet utensil.
- Refrigerator drip tray.
- Microwave.
- Stove.
- Water dispenser.
- Wooden cutting board.
- Trash can.
- Window sill.

How to remove:

- Ensure ventilation through a window, fan or both.
- Wash dishes daily to avoid pile-ups.
- Clean and dry surfaces after use.
- Clean out trays and containers that hold water daily.
- Take out the trash daily.



BEDROOM/ LIVING ROOM

Where it grows:

- Mattress.
- Air conditioner.
- Heating vent.
- Couch and curtain.
- Indoor plants.
- Fireplace and chimney.

How to remove:

- Ensure ventilation and light in the room.
- Ensure fabric-covered furniture is clean and dry.
- Clean the chimney and fireplace and dry the bricks around them.
- Service the air conditioner and heating vent often.
- Clean and change water trays and pots with indoor plants.

Sources: Medical News Today, WebMD, Healthline, CDC, New York State Department of Health

Environmental illness:

A THREAT TO ALL

A clean environment will result in better quality of life

By Ridzvaani Nagarajen

Chemicals have become a part of our lives, sustaining almost every activity in our daily lives. Sadly, due to overused, uncleared or dangerously abandoned waste materials, hazardous chemicals have been released into the environment. The outcome from this situation has led to extreme changes in the weather, temperature, increased pollution and environmental toxins.

As a consequence, there’s a higher probability that the quality of life will deteriorate due to environmental illness, both directly and indirectly.

The old saying, "what you don't know can't hurt you," isn't always applicable in all aspects of life. When it comes to environmental illness, what you know can actually help you!

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS?

According to the Invisible Disabilities Association, environmental illness is a term that is used to describe a number of health conditions that originate from the exposure of chemicals and toxic substances that are released into the environment unconsciously by humans. These hazardous chemicals can widely be discovered within the place you live, work or ythe area your children play in.

> THE OLD SAYING, "WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN'T HURT YOU," ISN'T ALWAYS APPLICABLE IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE.

Furthermore, such chemicals cannot be seen with the naked eye and can travel easily through air, soil and water. In addition to that, they can also be on plants and animals too. What’s more frightening is the fact that they’re exposed into the environment through different sources like:

- **LANDFILLS:** A site where waste materials are disposed.
- **INCINERATORS:** Burning of waste products using high-temperature.
- **FACTORIES:** Contributes to air, land and water pollution via chemical spills and disposal of toxic waste.

All of these factors are collectively responsible for contributing to Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including allergies, heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic lung diseases such as asthma, birth defects as well as infertilities among men and women.

WHAT CAUSES ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS?

Nearly every activity carried out by humans leaves some kind of waste in the environment. Some if not all waste materials contain chemicals that are dangerous not only to the environment but to all living organisms including humans, flora and fauna. Some of the chemicals that are most likely to make you fall ill comprises of:

- Carcinogenic substances like nicotine found in cigarettes cause lung cancer.

- Exposure to asbestos, a natural fibrous rock such as Crocidolite (also known as blue asbestos), Amosite (also known as brown asbestos) and Chrysotile (also known as white asbestos) are found in some older buildings can cause tumours, lung cancer, and other diseases.

- Wood-burning stoves and poorly vented gas produces smoke and gas that leads to breathing difficulties.

- Certain chemicals in workplace environments may result in sterility among men and fertility issues in women.

- Lead poisoning can result in a number of health conditions that are common among children. Plus, it can cause brain damage as well as high blood pressure in adults.

CAUTION
LEAD HAZARD
DO NOT ENTER WORK AREA
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

ACTING TOGETHER ON THE BASIS OF COORDINATED HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENTAL POLICIES CAN MAKE REAL DIFFERENCES IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL LIVING ORGANISMS.

HOW MUCH DISEASE CAN BE PREVENTED THROUGH CLEANER ENVIRONMENTS?

This question lies within the hearts of every individual, globally. However, in relation to this, the World Health Organization (WHO) carried out a study in 2016 titled ‘Prevent Disease Through Healthy Environments’ to examine how specific diseases and injuries resulted from environmental risks and which regions and populations are affected widely.

As a result, it revealed that roughly one-quarter of the global burden disease and more than one-third of the burden among children were generated from modifiable environmental factors (measures the environmental impact on health like air, soil and water pollution consist of chemicals or biological agents). Some of the diseases that are impacted by environmental risks includes:

- Malaria
- Diarrhoea
- Lower respiratory infections
- Various forms of unintentional injuries

Many measures can be taken to conserve the quality of the environment as well as reduce environmental disease burden. A few options would be to:

- Improve hygiene measures.
- Promote safe household water storage.
- Use toxic substances wisely in the workplace and at home.
- The use of cleaner fuels like biodiesel and renewable diesel.
- Both private and government sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture, and industry should urgently incorporate health aspects into their everyday work life.

Acting together on the basis of coordinated health, environment and developmental policies can make real differences in the well-being of the environment as well as improve the quality of life for all living organisms.

WHAT IS GLOBAL BURDEN DISEASE

The Global Burden of Disease studies the comprehensive regional and global research program of disease burden that calculates mortality and disability from major diseases, injuries, and risk factors.

Sources: World Health Organization, Invisible Disabilities Association, Health and Safety Executive

14

WAYS TO MAKE THE WORLD A GREENER PLACE

The environment is also your home

By Yasanthi Devi & Isabel Andrew

Going green in hopes to improve the environment is more than just opting to use paper straws. There is so much more that can be done in our day-to-day lives that will make a significant difference in the long run. Fine tuning our daily routines and behaviours to be environmentally conscious may just hold the answer for a better world.

Below are some ways that can help you and us to make the environment a better one to live in both for you and the future.

1

MAKE HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES

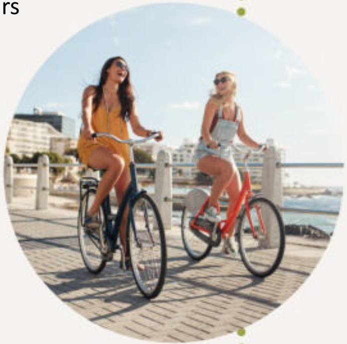
At least 40% of the entire agricultural output is contributed by livestock in developed nations, and 20% in developing ones. According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation, animal-based agriculture makes up 15% of all worldwide Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. Cattle, which are bred for both meat and milk production as well as for non-edible outputs like manure and draught power, account for around 65% of all emissions from the livestock industry.

Limiting your meat and dairy consumption will help you lower your carbon impact. This doesn't mean you would have to go vegetarian or vegan, it means you can consider incorporating a vegetarian meal in your weekly meal planning.

2

TRAVEL GREEN

If the destination of your choice is accessible via bicycle, walking, or public transportation, you're highly recommended to use these modes of transportation to travel.



In Malaysian cities, cars now account for the majority of road use, which results in traffic jams, noise pollution, and accidents. Private vehicles as a form of transportation are frequently a waste of resources because they are used inefficiently (they sit idle 95% of the time) and are expensive to buy. By opting to carpool or travel green, you can help reduce the carbon emissions of vehicles.

3

COMPOST

Garbage thrown every day by Malaysians in 2021 consisted of 10% of food that were still edible. To put it in a larger perspective, Malaysians threw more than 4,000 tonnes of edible food in 2021. To prevent food wastage, you can consider alternatives such as smaller meal portions, taking away foods and eating them later or if wastage does occur, composting may just be the answer.

You need a 50:50 mixture of nitrogen- and carbon-rich ingredients to generate effective compost. Grass cuttings and other lush, green vegetation are sources of nitrogen. Brown materials like cardboard and woody stems are sources of carbon.

4

USE WATER RESPONSIBLY

Excessive water use increases utility costs and uses a lot of energy. You can save money and water by choosing one of a few alternatives. Rainwater that has been stored in storage drums can be used for outdoor activities that consume a lot of water, such as washing your car or watering plants. When you've used up the water, you can refill it when it rains. Fortunately, we live in Malaysia where it rains a lot! So nature has got you covered.

When you're indoors, little actions like turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth or when scrubbing your face during your facial routine make a lot of change. A shorter shower time also makes a huge difference. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that an average showerhead uses 9.4 liters of water per minute. If your usual shower time is 10 minutes, you're using up approximately 94 liters of water!

5

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Hosting a weekly recycling programme where neighbours can drop by to drop off their recyclable items makes a huge impact on the community.

There are various financial advantages to implementing a recycling programme. Solid waste recycling can lower collection, transportation, and disposal costs while also generating employment. The selling of recyclable materials can bring in money for it. Recycling also contributes to maintaining environmental quality. It decreases air pollution, preserves resources, spares energy, and saves water. It also frees up landfill space.

6

PLAYTIME WITH RECYCLABLE ITEMS

During play time, parents can encourage their children to play with recyclable items that may look pretty ordinary at first sight. However, do not underestimate a child's creativity to put a twist on something mundane.

Children's imaginations can be stimulated by the usage of cardboard cylinders, egg cartons, packaging materials, and plastic bottles. It's free and it's fun!

7

CULTIVATE A GREEN SCHOOL

If you're a teacher or are on a school board, try carrying out green initiatives like teaching kids how to grow their own vegetables in a school garden or encouraging them to use eco-friendly craft supplies to turn the hows and whys of going green into a lesson.

8

GO GREEN IN THE OFFICE

Management can work together with the employees to implement various green initiatives such as reducing paper usage, encouraging carpooling amongst colleagues and incentivising those who carpool.

Companies can also consider providing drinking glasses during events and meetings instead of opting for mineral bottles which contribute to a large chunk of global waste percentage.

9

OPT FOR LOCALLY-GROWN PRODUCE

Vegetables that are grown locally in the community make a great food choice as they help save energy by reducing logistics costs. Eating produce that is not grown locally can be expensive with the addition of transportation costs.

Growing organic food is also labour intensive. However, the bright side is that you know where your foods are coming from and they will cost marginally lesser as compared to imported fruits and vegetables.

10

PRE-LOVED

Old is gold is the saying and there must be a reason. If you're looking for nursery furniture, a jewellery box or even a book, why not pop by a secondhand shop? Giving new life to used items can cut their carbon footprint by half, save you lots and boast a cool story.

Plus, if you have excess clothes in your closet that you rarely use or if you're still hanging on to a loved one's clothes, you can breathe new life into them by selling them as preloved items or donating them.

11

TURN DOWN THE BAG

Shopaholics, it's time to shine! While everyone's paying extra for single-use plastic bags, show off your fancy reusable shopping bag. By investing in good-quality tote bags and mesh bags, you'll reduce plastic usage and save money.

12

BUY ONLY WHAT YOU WILL USE

The next time you're with a shopping cart, take some time to differentiate between the items you really need and those that you simply want. By making conscious purchases, you'll decrease the energy used and pollution emitted in the manufacturing, transportation, and disposal processes of goods.

Shopping list
- milk
- butter
- meat
- rice
- eggs
- juice
- bread
- fruits
- onion

13

SHUT OFF LIGHTS

Shutting off unnecessary lights, such as in empty rooms, will not only save money but also lower your carbon footprint. Even better, keep the shades open during daylight hours and get yourselves some Vitamin D.

14

UPCYCLE

Feeling crafty? Upcycle the things around you. Whether you're carving out a chandelier from bicycle parts or making an aquarium from an upright piano, upcycling can reduce the greenhouse gasses required to manufacture new ones. If you're serious about it, you can turn it into a side hustle and earn some cash too.

So you see, going green isn't so tough to do. With a few simple product swaps and some greener habits, you're on your way to making our home a better place. Why not begin today? ■

Source: The Star, United Nations Development Programme (Malaysian cities – a powerful vehicle in reducing emissions), United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (Key facts and findings), Harvard Green, Greenmatch.UK, The Guardian, Eco-Friendly Habits

The Unplanned Journey

Understanding parenthood through the lens of raising a special needs child

By Yasanthi Devi

The journey of parenting is a roller coaster ride consisting of the joys of nurturing and the challenges of raising a happy and healthy child that will eventually grow into an adult. Often, it's not a smooth sailing journey, riddled with challenges and uncertainties. Yet, somehow parents find a way to make it work.

However, the journey of parenthood is not similar for everyone. There is no foolproof formula that guarantees flying colours when it comes to parenting. Many factors come into play when raising a child.

When discussing the diversity in parenting journeys, parenthood may look different when parenting a child with special needs. To share more on this journey, we've gotten in touch with Richard and Catherine who are parents to a creative and bright boy, Ernest. In this heartwarming and inspirational interview, Richard and Catherine share their journey in raising a special needs child, the challenges that they went through, and how as a family unit, they grew stronger.

1Twenty80:

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ERNEST?

Richard & Catherine:

Ernest Richard is 15 years old now. He likes to draw and he loves to talk. He's very inquisitive and curious about everything. Because of his curious nature, he likes to ask a lot of questions.

He also loves cars and he likes to learn about electronic things. When we're on the road, if he sees something that catches his attention, he loves to talk about it.

Ernest is currently in Form Two and he's attending government school whilst also taking up special classes in a private special needs facility. We're also sending him to other academic classes. On the weekends, Ernest goes to art classes. We want him to learn something based on his passion.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH RAISING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

Richard & Catherine:

The first thing that comes to our mind is the word patience. It's imperative to be patient when raising a special needs child. Our son is diagnosed with mild autism and the challenges we experienced since Day One were tough. The day that we found out Ernest had autism, as parents, it was a very stressful time in our lives.

Knowing that he's going to be like this for the rest of his life, we thought to ourselves: How are we going to raise him? Upon his diagnosis, we weren't aware of the challenges that come with raising a special needs child. In the beginning, we were blank. We did not know what steps to take next upon finding out about our son's condition.

We spoke to people and we did some readings for us to develop a deeper understanding of our son's condition and to better learn how we can help him.

So, to answer your question, the first challenge we experienced was 'We don't know', meaning we didn't know how to raise a special needs child.

The stress from feelings like these, it's very hard to describe. We're still learning and growing today.

1Twenty80:

HOW BIG OF AN IMPACT DOES FINANCE PLAY IN YOUR JOURNEY OF RAISING A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

Richard & Catherine:

Finance is a big area of concern for us. Sending kids to special needs classes can be really expensive and it's not something every parent can afford.

If you want to send a special needs child for special education, it's really costly. This is because their education is specifically tailored for the child and this requires a different skill set. Teachers who teach special needs kids are trained professionally as well in this area. We're thankful that we can afford to send Ernest to special classes. However, we also worry about other parents who may not have the same ability as us.

1Twenty80:

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN SELF-CARE WHILE CARING FOR A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

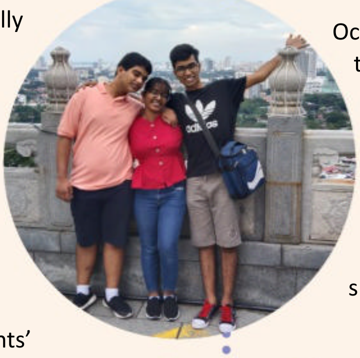
Richard & Catherine:

Both of us, as husband and wife, and parents, help and support each other when it comes to caring for Ernest.

Our kids (Ernest's older siblings) also help us a lot when it comes to looking after Ernest and they spend a lot of time with Ernest when we're not around. During tough situations, we get support from our extended families. Our family is very understanding and they are accommodating with Ernest, especially when Ernest is dealing with temper tantrums.

Ernest also has really good teachers who help guide and teach him. The church community that we are a part of also helped us in our times of need.

We would also like to highlight that it's important to identify and understand the child's condition. The severity of the condition can impact the parents' stress levels as well. Circumstances can differ and be impacted based on the child's condition. Every parent's journey with a special needs child is different and unique.



1Twenty80:

HOW DO YOU HELP YOUR CHILD NAVIGATE THROUGH SOCIAL CHALLENGES?

Richard & Catherine:

Ernest gets involved in a lot of programmes at his school. The school occasionally organises out-of-school activities. This helps him to meet and interact with people from all walks of life. For example, a few years back, he went to Langkawi by flight and this was a school organised trip. There was even a trip where he stayed overnight at a paddy field located in Sekinchan.

We want him to get exposure and we try to let him go as much as we can. Ernest always has the people with the right kind of expertise to guide him when he's involved in programmes or activities.

As parents, we also take him out to public areas so he gets to acclimate and be involved in social interactions. If Ernest experienced some challenges while he is in a public setting, upon returning home, we explain to Ernest what he did well and what he can improve on in terms of his behaviour and actions. We do these reflections so that he doesn't repeat the same mistakes in the future. Usually, he listens, understands, and is able to follow the things that we discuss during reflections.

We also give Ernest a heads-up before heading to a crowded or public area. This enables us to explain to him the dos and don'ts. Sometimes, he does forget instructions, and here's where Ernest's siblings step in and try to help guide him as much as they can.

1Twenty80:

DOES SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE?

Richard & Catherine:

Definitely! Ernest's education in the government school and private school is different compared to the mainstream classes. He learns cooking, how to manage one's self in terms of hygiene, and carry out daily activities such as ironing clothes and preparing the bed.

Occupational therapy is also something that he learns. He learns key skills like how to write and the right way to hold a pencil. Special education is important because it helps Ernest learn very specific things. Things that may come easily for us, may not come as easy for special kids. This is where special education plays a key role.

> WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND THE CHILD'S CONDITION. THE SEVERITY OF THE CONDITION CAN IMPACT THE PARENTS' STRESS LEVELS AS WELL.

1Twenty80:

WERE THERE TIMES WHEN YOU FELT HELPLESS IN YOUR JOURNEY RAISING A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

Richard & Catherine:

In the beginning, we were extremely worried because we didn't know what we were supposed to do, how we were going to raise him and what was going to happen to Ernest. When we initially found out about Ernest's condition, Ernest wasn't able to communicate and he didn't make eye contact.

He only started communicating at the age of 7 years old. It started with baby talk and eye contact was still a challenge. Ernest likes to talk to me (his mother) by holding my chin. We have to maintain close contact when talking to him.

When Ernest was a child, he was playing alone most of the time and didn't talk to anybody. This made us worried. It was our paediatric doctor who recommended we enrol Ernest in a class at the age of 3 years old, to observe his development. When Ernest turned 4 years old, the signs were obvious and we then approached The National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) to get Ernest diagnosed.

During the process at NASOM, we had to do things like fill up a questionnaire and bring Ernest in for observations. We got to know about NASOM through our doctor and through NASOM, we were slowly guided to other facilities where we got to meet other experts for regular check-ups.

1Twenty80:

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT YOU FEEL IS NOT REALLY SPOKEN ABOUT WHEN RAISING A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

Richard & Catherine:

Specialised education is really important for kids like Ernest and if possible, special education should begin at a really young age so that they get to grasp essential skills and concepts before it's too late.

Understanding and learning start at a really early age and it's imperative that parents seize this window to ensure that their child gets to grasp key skills. Starting special education at a young age also enables the child to acclimate gradually to the change in schedules and daily activities.

We are concerned that if special education started at a later age, the child may not be able to keep up as they are used to the relaxed schedule, prior to being enrolled.

Parents should also be aware of their child's development and take immediate measures if they feel something is amiss. For example, if a child isn't communicating by the age of two or three years old, parents should consult a doctor just as a precautionary method to understand better.

> SPECIALISED EDUCATION IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR KIDS LIKE ERNEST AND IF POSSIBLE, SPECIAL EDUCATION SHOULD BEGIN AT A REALLY YOUNG AGE SO THAT THEY GET TO GRASP ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND CONCEPTS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE THE PLATFORMS YOU REFER TO, TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS?

Richard & Catherine:

We attend talks and conferences that focus on how to raise a special needs child. This helps us learn ways we can better communicate with Ernest and identify activities that can benefit him as well.

We also ask around by talking to experts like doctors and also parents who share a similar journey as us. The government and private schools that Ernest goes to have also helped us. The teachers there help tell us the things we should do in regards to documentation and activities for Ernest.

We also read extensively to understand Ernest's condition and how we can better help him across many areas of life. Essentially, we figure this out as we go and talk to people with who we cross paths.

> TEAMWORK BETWEEN PARENTS AND CARETAKERS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. SOMETIMES, ONE PERSON MAY BE FEELING MORALLY DOWN AND IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE SIGNIFICANT OTHER TO SUPPORT THEM.

1Twenty80:

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WISH TO SHARE WITH PARENTS OR CARETAKERS WHO ARE ON A SIMILAR JOURNEY AS YOU?

Richard & Catherine:

Teamwork between parents and caretakers is extremely important. Sometimes, one person may be feeling morally down and it's important for the significant other to support them. When met with a slump, it's important that we have each other.

We want to stress that it's also important that parents should accept their child's condition if their child is diagnosed as a special child. There are some parents that refuse to accept their child's condition and as a result of that, they don't put their child in a special school. They insist their child go to a normal school and sometimes the child gets left behind in school as their studies are not tailored for them. This can be demotivating for the child.

Richard:

My wife supports me when I'm feeling stressed and unmotivated. She is there with me throughout the whole time and I really appreciate her for this. She constantly motivates me and I am very appreciative of that.

We hope that this conversation has given you a more comprehensive understanding of what is frequently described as an isolated journey. Richard and Catherine showed us the importance of family and community support in their endeavour to raise Ernest. In light of this, we all hope to have the chance, whenever it arises, to assist those who are travelling in a similar journey as Richard and Catherine. ■

If you're a parent of a special needs child and you're looking for places that can help guide you, below are some of the platforms that were helpful for Richard & Catherine.

The National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM)

ADDRESS:
Pacific Place Commercial Centre, Unit B-3-3, Jalan PJU 1A/4, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan
CONTACT: 603-7832 1928 , 603-7831 7928
EMAIL: info@nasom.org.my

Child Development Centre HUKM

ADDRESS: Hospital UKM, PPUKM, Jalan Yaacob Latif, Bandar Tun Razak, 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur
CONTACT: 03-3352 6851

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per serving (5g)
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1393 kJ 71 kJ
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Protein 0 g 0 g
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Direction For Use:
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Sciatica
101

Tips, tricks and the know-hows from your friendly neighbourhood chiropractor

By Yasanthi Devi

The start of 2023 not only marked the new year but also unveiled a revelation. In January 2023, popular singer Adele, known for songs like ‘Hello’ and ‘Rolling in the Deep’, revealed that she is suffering from a bad case of sciatica, which has impacted on how she walks.

The acclaimed singer’s shocking health revelation went viral across social media platforms, and this in turn has shed light on sciatica as a whole. The term "sciatica" saw an increased number of searches during this period, and a discourse space was opened in the community to further understand this pain that travels along the sciatic nerves.

To add on to the discourse with credibly sourced information, we’ve gotten in touch with Dr. Stephanie Choo, a certified chiropractor from the renown International Medical University (IMU), where she graduated with Honours in Bachelor of Science, specialising in chiropractic care. Dr. Stephanie consults on areas such as spine related conditions, pre and post-natal back pain, chronic musculoskeletal pain, and many more. Dr. Stephanie currently runs a chiropractic centre, Spineplus in Bandar Sunway.

> SCIATICA PAIN CAN VARY WIDELY. IT MAY FEEL LIKE A MILD TINGLING, DULL ACHE, OR BURNING SENSATION.

1Twenty80:

What is sciatica?

Dr. Stephanie Choo:

Sciatica is nerve pain from an injury or irritation to the sciatic nerve, which originates in your buttock or gluteal area. The sciatic nerve is the longest and thickest (almost finger-width) nerve in the body.

1Twenty80:

What are the symptoms of sciatica?

Dr. Stephanie:

Sciatica pain can vary widely. It may feel like a mild tingling, dull ache, or burning sensation. In some cases, the pain is severe enough to make a person unable to move.

The pain most often occurs on one side. Some people have sharp pain in one part of the leg or hip and numbness in other parts. The pain in the leg is often more painful than the pain in the back. The pain or numbness may also be felt on the back of the calf or on the sole of the foot. The affected leg may feel weak.

The pain may be constant or intermittent. Also, the pain is usually more severe in your leg compared to your lower back. The pain may feel worse if you sit or stand for long periods of time, when you stand up, or when you twist your upper body. A forced and sudden body movement, like a cough or sneeze, can also make the pain worse.

1Twenty80:

What are the causes of sciatica?

Dr. Stephanie:

➜ HERNIATED DISC

One of the most common causes of sciatica is a herniated disc in the lower part of the spine. It’s also called a "slipped disc," though there’s no slipping going on.

➜ SPINAL STENOSIS

Spinal stenosis is the narrowing of the spinal canal from degenerative disc, thickened ligaments or osteoarthritis of the facet joints.

➡ **PREGNANCY**
During the second and third trimesters of pregnancy, the shifting of weight and loosening of ligaments can put indirect pressure on the sciatic nerve.

➡ **TUMOUR**
More rarely, a tumour can put pressure on the nerve. Or a disease such as diabetes can damage the nerve.

Are there any risk factors associated with sciatica?

Dr. Stephanie:

➡ **AGE**
Age-related changes in the spine, such as herniated disks and bone spurs, are the most common causes of sciatica.

➡ **OBESITY**
Being overweight increases stress on the spine.

➡ **OCCUPATION**
A job that requires twisting the back, carrying heavy loads, or driving a motor vehicle for long periods might play a role in sciatica.

➡ **PROLONGED SITTING**
People who sit a lot or don't move much are more likely to develop sciatica than active people are.

➡ **DIABETES**
This condition, which affects the way the body uses blood sugar, increases the risk of nerve damage.

1Twenty80:

Does chiropractic care help with sciatica? If so, how?

Dr. Stephanie:
Yes, of course! Chiropractors can use spinal manipulation to reposition a herniated disc and relieve pressure on the sciatic nerve. Depending on the cause of the sciatica, we also provide decompression for herniated discs, modalities to help with inflammation, trigger point therapy if a particular muscle is tight and compressing the nerve, and many more!

We also provide home exercises for patients, be it stretching or strengthening exercises, to help speed up the recovery.

1Twenty80:

Can sciatica lead to any complications?

Dr. Stephanie:
Chronic (ongoing, lasting) pain can be a complication of sciatica. If the pinched nerve is seriously injured, chronic muscle weakness, such as a "drop foot," might occur, when numbness in the foot makes normal walking impossible. Sciatica can potentially cause permanent nerve damage, resulting in a loss of feeling in the affected legs.

1Twenty80:

Is sciatica preventable?

Dr. Stephanie:
Definitely! Sedentary lifestyle puts you at risk for many conditions and not just sciatica, adequate stretching and more will definitely help to prevent it. ■

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At Azomis, we believe that skincare should just be about giving your skin what it needs and not everyone needs a 12-step skincare routine.

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Men & pelvic floor health

What you should be doing more

By Isabel Andrew

Pelvic floor muscles are an abandoned part of the body. We don't seem to talk enough about this part of our anatomy much like we do with our hamstrings and biceps. So come and learn with us!

We use it to poop, pee and have sex

Yeap, you read that right. We use our pelvic floor muscles a lot when we poop, pee and have sex. This is because our pelvic floor literally acts as a floor, holding up vital organs like our pelvis, bladder, intestines and internal reproductive organs. Its muscles and connective tissues provide flexibility for bodily functions to occur. They also absorb external pressure when we lift heavy things or simply cough. This goes a long way in protecting our spine and organs.

Speaking of muscles, the ability to control our pelvic floor muscles forms the process of waste removal. The pelvic floor muscles coordinate the urethra and the anus. When we squeeze the muscles, the passageways narrow, causing the stool to pass through. Basically it:

- Supports the bladder, urethra, prostate, bowel (large intestine), rectum and anus.
- Squeezes and relaxes when peeing, pooping or passing gas.
- Helps with erections and ejaculation during sex.

What can go wrong

Pelvic floor muscles can be weakened by:

- Surgery for bladder or bowel problems.
- Constipation.
- Being overweight.
- Persistent heavy lifting.
- High-impact exercise.
- Persistent coughing.
- Ageing.

As a result, weak pelvic floor muscles can lead to:

- **STRESS INCONTINENCE:** Peeing when you laugh, cough, sneeze or lift something.
- **URGE INCONTINENCE:** Frequently feeling the urge to pee and not being able to hold it.
- **FAECAL INCONTINENCE:** Struggling to control bowel movements.
- **ANAL INCONTINENCE:** Struggling to control when you pass gas.

Can they be too tight? They sure can! Hypertonic pelvic floor occurs when the muscles are tense and can't relax. People with this issue experience constipation, painful sex, urgency and pelvic pain.

How to solve it

Before working on it, you must first feel your pelvic floor muscles. Try these out:

- **URETHRA:** Imagine that you're peeing and squeezing as if you were stopping the flow midstream.
- **ANUS:** Squeeze your anus as if you were preventing yourself from breaking wind. In each case, you should feel muscles inside your pelvis pull inward and upward. These are your pelvic floor muscles.
- Stand in front of a mirror with no clothes on. Pull in your pelvic floor muscles strongly and hold them. You should see the penis draw in and your scrotum should lift.

Now that you know where they are, try out these popular pelvic floor muscle exercises, also known as Kegel exercises:

1. Squeeze and draw in the muscles around your anus. Lift them up inside. You should have a sense of "lift" each time you squeeze your pelvic floor muscles.
2. Try to hold them strong and tight as you count to 8. Now, let them go and relax. You should have a distinct feeling of "letting go". If you can't hold for 8, just hold for as long as you can.
3. Repeat "squeeze and lift" and let go. It is best to rest for about 8 seconds in between each lift-up of the muscles.
4. Repeat this "squeeze and lift" as many times as you can, up to a limit of 8 to 10 squeezes. This equals one set.
5. Try to do three sets of 8 to 10 squeezes each day.

WE USE OUR PELVIC FLOOR MUSCLES A LOT WHEN WE POOP, PEE AND HAVE SEX. THIS IS BECAUSE OUR PELVIC FLOOR LITERALLY ACTS AS A FLOOR, HOLDING UP VITAL ORGANS LIKE OUR PELVIS, BLADDER, INTESTINES AND INTERNAL REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS.

Kegel exercises can be done anywhere while sitting, standing or lying down. Remember to:

- Keep breathing.
- Only squeeze and lift.
- Do not tighten your buttocks.
- Keep your thighs relaxed.

Other treatments include:

- Managing constipation through diet, exercise or medications.
- Surgery to reconstruct and secure your pelvic organs in place.

Pelvic floor exercises are highly effective when individually tailored and monitored. If you are unsure, don't risk it. Speak to pelvic health physiotherapists for their expert opinions. ■

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Healthline

A CARETAKER'S GUIDE TO MANAGING SENIORS' MEDICINES

Medication management is important for the elderly

By Yasanthi Devi

Physical changes brought on by ageing can have an impact on how the body processes medication. Unsuitable medications have the potential to cause adverse reactions and other complications in worst-case scenarios. As a result, it's critical for you to keep track of the medications the seniors in your care are consuming.

We've asked Gina Koay Wan Lee, Director, and Pharmacist at City Wellness Pharmacy, for her expert input in hopes that we can offer some advice and pointers on carers' roles in managing medications for the elderly.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS CARETAKERS SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF WHEN IT COMES TO MANAGING THEIR ELDERLY'S MEDICATIONS?

Gina Koay:

When you are caring for elderly patients, it's important to keep an eye on the type of medications taken, to make sure they take the medications at the right dose and right time. The three most important elements when it comes to medication management are tracking the signs of complications, keeping track of the outcome of the therapy, and identifying potentially harmful medications which may cause side effects.

1Twenty80:

COULD YOU SHARE SOME TIPS ON HOW CARETAKERS OR THE ELDERLY COULD EFFECTIVELY STORE MEDICATIONS?

Gina:

Doctors prescribe medications to the elderly due to certain illnesses. Pharmacists then dispense the medications. When the medications are brought back to the house, it's important to safely keep their medications. Here are some tips for storing the medications:

You need to store it in a cool, dry place, such as a dresser drawer or a kitchen cabinet away from the stove, sink, or hot appliances. You may use a storage box to keep the medications in a proper space. If possible, remember to keep the medicine in its original container to avoid exposure to sunlight and moisture.

> YOU NEED TO STORE IT IN A COOL, DRY PLACE, SUCH AS A DRESSER DRAWER OR A KITCHEN CABINET AWAY FROM THE STOVE, SINK, OR HOT APPLIANCES. YOU MAY USE A STORAGE BOX TO KEEP THE MEDICATIONS IN A PROPER SPACE.

1Twenty80:

HOW CAN THE CARETAKER AND THE ELDERLY BETTER UNDERSTAND POTENTIAL MEDICATION INTERACTIONS AND SIDE EFFECTS?

Gina:

It's important to know what each medicine is for and about possible side effects. Caretakers need to work with pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to keep track of the medications taken by the elderly.

Discuss the care plan with the pharmacists and healthcare professionals on a regular basis. As caretakers of the elderly, learn as much as you can. Bring a list of all prescribed medicines, and those bought without a prescription, including supplements and herbs, to each healthcare provider's appointment. Check for any potential medical interactions, bring the pill bottles with you to show the provider. Talk with the pharmacist to make sure the medicines are still needed. Find out what condition each medicine treats. Be sure you know what the dosage is and when it should be taken. Ask which medicines need to be given every day and which are used only for certain symptoms or problems. Ask about the potential side effects. Write down any new instructions and make sure both: you and the senior under your care understand the instructions.

1Twenty80:

WHAT SHOULD CARETAKERS DO WHEN THEY NOTICE HEALTH CHANGES IN THEIR ELDERLY UPON STARTING NEW MEDICATION?

Gina:

It's important to set a goal for the treatment of the health condition. Once the elderly is being prescribed a new medication, caretakers should observe and pay attention to the health changes. For example, if the elderly person has high cholesterol issues, the doctor may prescribe a new medication to lower cholesterol. The monitoring of cholesterol levels should be done once every 3 months. Notice for any side effects while the senior is taking the medications, such as bloating, or muscle pain. Report the health changes to the pharmacist and doctor in charge. Doctors may change to a new regime if the medication is not suitable for the elderly.

> **MEDICATION CANNOT WORK AS INTENDED IF IT'S NOT TAKEN AS PRESCRIBED. CONSISTENCY AND TAKING PILLS ACCORDING TO GUIDANCE PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ANY TREATMENT.**

1Twenty80:

WHAT SHOULD A COMPREHENSIVE MEDICATION LIST INCLUDE?

Gina:

You may use the following questions to build a comprehensive medication list:

- What is the name of this medication?
- What is the strength of the medication?
- Why do you take this medication? [To manage what condition or symptom?]
- How much of this medication do you take? [number of pills, liquid amount, etc.]
- When do you take this medication?
- How do you take this medication? [orally, through injection, sublingually, etc.]
- What are other special instructions for taking this medication? [Example, with food, with water, do not take with specific substances/foods, etc.]
- What does this medication look like?
- What are the starting and ending/stopping dates for this medication?
- Who prescribed this medication?
- Where do you get this prescription filled?

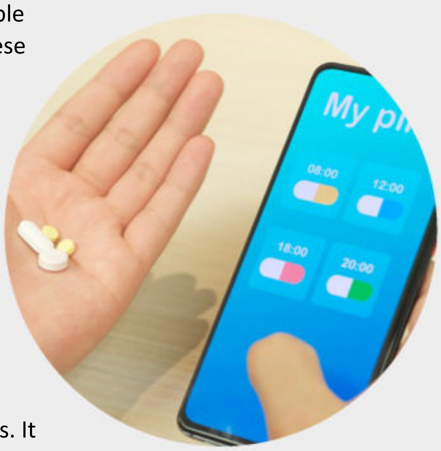
1Twenty80:

ARE MEDICATION REMINDERS AND TRACKING SYSTEMS EFFECTIVE?

Gina:

There are various pill reminder apps and medication trackers in the market. The big question here is how do we know if these are effective in helping the patients adhere to the medication prescribed by the doctors?

Pill dispensers are cheap, but you still need to remember to take the medication. On the other hand, smartphone alarms are free, but most people end up ignoring these alarms as constant notifications can get annoying after a while.



There's one type of smart sensing device, which is the only tracker for a pill blister that comes with built-in sensors. It can sense when you pop a pill off the blister and notifies you only when you miss a pill. This means, if you take the pill, you don't get the daily annoying reminders. Moreover, there's no manual input needed to keep track of your pill usage.

Medication cannot work as intended if it's not taken as prescribed. Consistency and taking pills according to guidance play a key role in any treatment. Medication adherence in chronic health conditions is definitely important to ensure the health condition is well controlled.

1Twenty80:

HOW CAN CARETAKERS HELP SENIORS WITH ALZHEIMER'S OR DEMENTIA WITH THEIR MEDICATION?

Gina:

People with Alzheimer's disease may take medicines to treat the disease itself, mood or behaviour changes, and other medical conditions. Caregivers can ensure that medicines are taken safely and correctly. Here are some tips to help you manage medications for someone with Alzheimer's disease.

Ask the doctor or pharmacist:

- Why is this medicine being used?
- What positive effects should I look for, and when?
- How long will the person need to take it?
- What is the dose and how often should he or she take the medicine?
- What if the person misses a dose?
- What are the side effects, and what can I do about them?
- Can this medicine cause problems if taken with other medicines?

1Twenty80:

HOW CAN CARETAKERS PLAN AHEAD FOR MEDICATION REFILLS?

Gina:

As caretakers, it is important to keep track of how many refills are left for each medicine. Make sure you know when you need to see the pharmacist next for a refill.

Plan ahead. Do contact the pharmacy for refills at least a week before they are due to run out. Ask your doctor which medicines you can get so that it'll last as long as 90 days supply.

Managing medications for the seniors under your care is a crucial role to play. Working hand-in-hand with community pharmacists and doctors will enable you to carry out your role effectively whilst ensuring the well-being of the elderly in your care. ■

This piece was an interview with a White Coat 360 pharmacist

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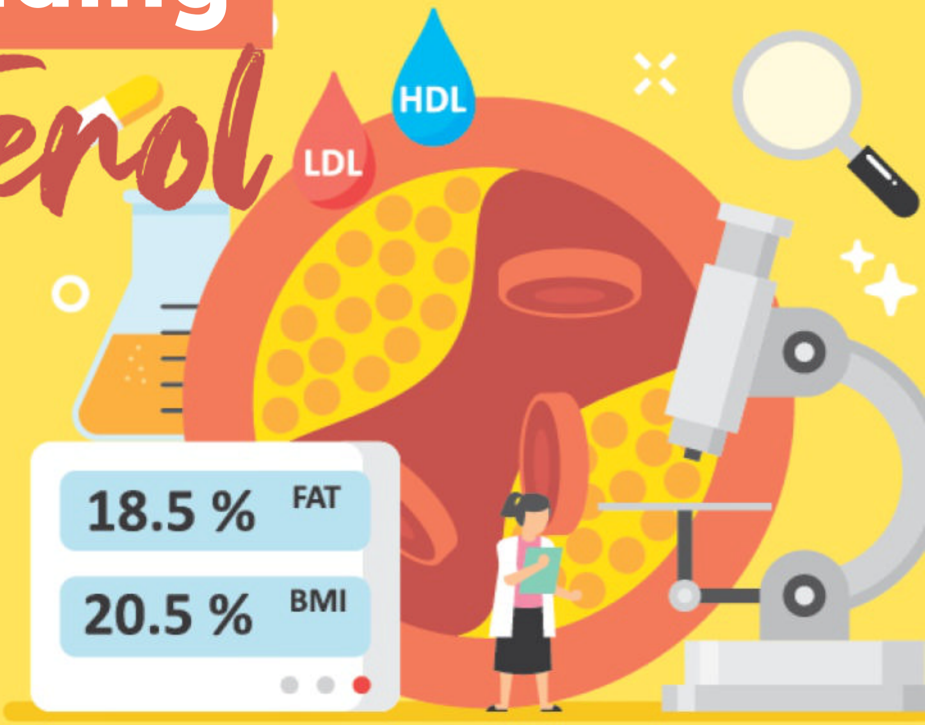
Understanding Cholesterol

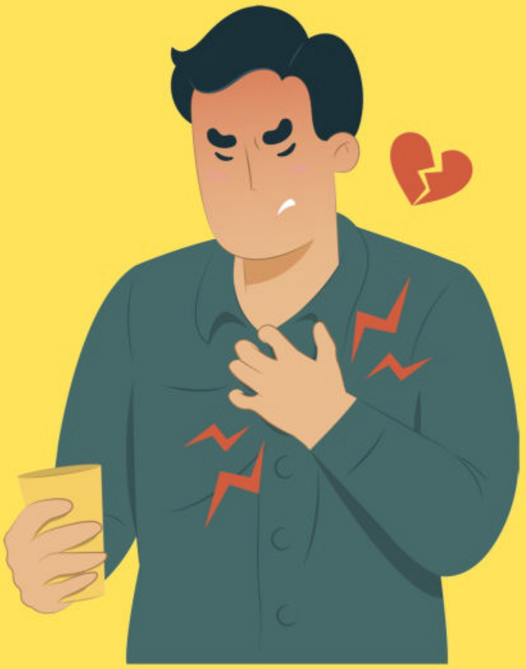


Knowing the good and the bad

By Yasanthi Devi

According to a study on coronary artery disease in Malaysian youths, about 70% of those between the ages of 15 and 24 have at least one cardiovascular risk factor. One of the major contributing factors to this can be narrowed down to high cholesterol, diabetes, and hypertension.

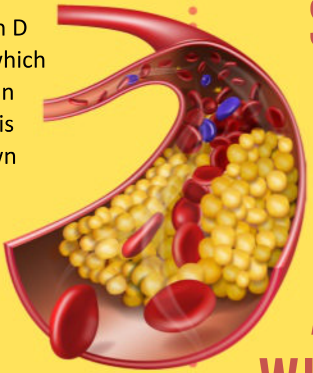
The Malaysian youths must act immediately and dispose of the notion that heart attacks only affect the elderly. On that note, we aim to shed some light on one of the major contributing factors to heart disease among youths: high cholesterol.



What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a type of lipid in which it's a waxy-like substance found in your blood. Cholesterol is produced by the liver naturally and it plays a significant role in cell formation, hormones and is linked with Vitamin D.

Experts believe the liver and kidney help transform Vitamin D into cholesterol which later helps our skin cells. Cholesterol is a more well-known type of lipid and its composition consists of part protein and part lipid. The human body needs lipids to continue being healthy.



CHOLESTEROL IS PRODUCED BY THE LIVER NATURALLY AND IT PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN CELL FORMATION, HORMONES AND IS LINKED WITH VITAMIN D.

Different types of cholesterol

There are various types of cholesterols. Some are healthy and some pose a risk to human health. Below are further insights.

➡ LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol

LDL cholesterol is sometimes called the 'bad cholesterol' and it composites most of the human body's cholesterol. LDL is called bad cholesterol because it transports cholesterol to the arteries and in turn, this cholesterol can sometimes accumulate in the artery walls.

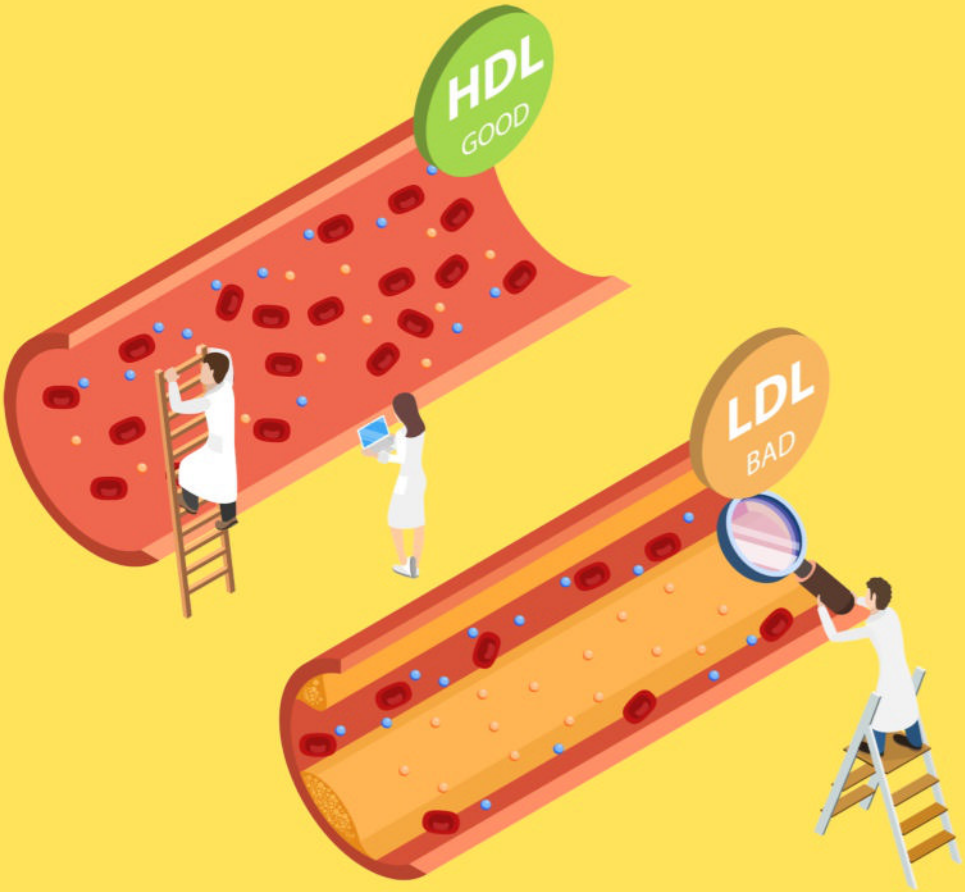
An overaccumulation of cholesterol in the arteries may cause the buildup of atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis refers to the buildup of plaque that can increase the risk of blood clots in the arteries.

INFO: When there is an excess level of LDL cholesterol in the body, it can accumulate on the walls of your blood vessels. This accumulation is called 'plaque' and too much growth of plaque can endanger your health by posing a risk to various health problems such as heart disease and stroke.

➡ HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol

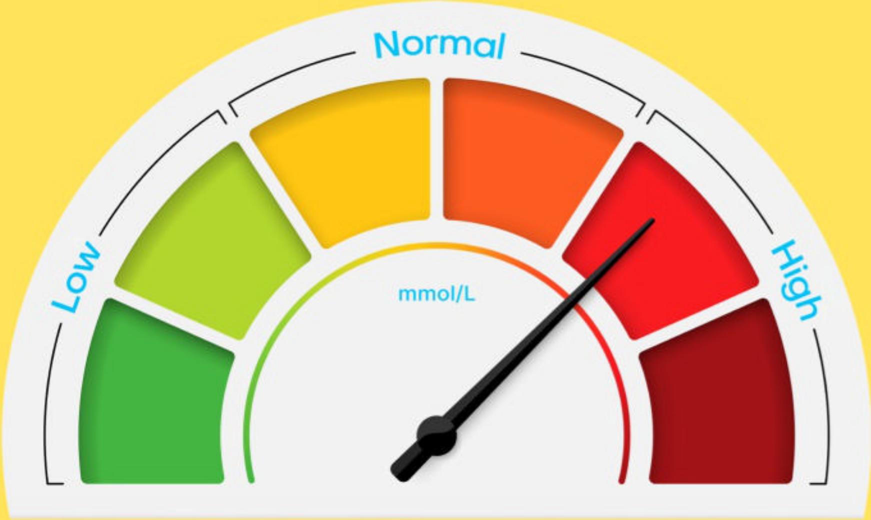
HDL cholesterol is sometimes called the 'good cholesterol' because it absorbs cholesterol in the blood and then carries it directly to the liver. The liver then helps flush HDL from the body. HDL is believed to help the body expel excess cholesterol. This lessens the likelihood of excess cholesterol accumulating in the arteries.

LDL IS CALLED BAD CHOLESTEROL BECAUSE IT TRANSPORTS CHOLESTEROL TO THE ARTERIES AND IN TURN, THIS CHOLESTEROL CAN SOMETIMES ACCUMULATE IN THE ARTERY WALLS.



Cholesterol Scale Indicator

Less than 2.6mmol/L of LDL cholesterol is considered ideal. The risk of heart disease may double if one's total cholesterol level exceeds 5.2 mmol/L.



Risk factors

There may be a higher risk of one developing higher cholesterol if they:

- are obese.
- frequently consume fatty foods.
- have insufficient physical activity.
- come from a family that has a history of high cholesterol.
- have diabetes.

What's the link between triglycerides and heart problems?

Triglycerides are lipids, which are waxy fats that provide energy to the body. Triglycerides are both produced by your body and obtained from meals. The risk of heart attack, stroke, and pancreatitis increases when your triglycerides and cholesterol are high.

Causes that lead to unhealthy cholesterol levels

There are some lifestyle factors that may contribute to high cholesterol:

- Consuming foods that are high in trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Obesity.
- Smoking.
- Not exercising enough.
- Excessive alcohol consumption.

LDL
HDL
CHOLESTEROL

Complications

Without treatment or early detection, LDL (bad cholesterol) can accumulate in your arteries over time, turning into plaque. This in turn can pose a risk of narrowing the arteries. It's also known as atherosclerosis.

Atherosclerosis if left untreated can limit the blood flow through the arteries. As a result, it can also increase the risk of developing dangerous blood clots.

Other high-risk conditions can also stem from atherosclerosis, such as (but not limited to):

- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chest pains (angina)

WITHOUT TREATMENT OR EARLY DETECTION, LDL CAN ACCUMULATE IN YOUR ARTERIES OVER TIME, TURNING INTO PLAQUE.

Tips to lower cholesterol

Do consult with your doctor regarding the most effective steps you can take to manage or lower your cholesterol level. Your doctor may suggest you to make some lifestyle alterations as the first step. They can often look like this:

Make changes to your diet

Your doctor may suggest you refrain from eating foods that are highly fatty. This can include fast foods and sugary foods. Instead, you will be advised to eat foods that are high in lean protein such as fish, legumes, and more. You may also be advised to consume high-fiber food such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Exercise regularly

Exercises such as running, biking, yoga, and swimming are said to increase HDL (good cholesterol) levels.

Avoid alcohol consumption and smoking

Alcohol consumption increases blood triglycerides and cholesterol levels. If your triglyceride levels reach too high, they might build up in the liver, leading to fatty liver disease. Your cholesterol levels increase because the liver is unable to function as effectively as it should and cannot eliminate cholesterol from the blood. ■

Source: WebMD, Healthline, Mayo Clinic, Free Malaysia Today, Centers For Disease Control & Prevention (United States), NHS UK.

Do you need a skincare water filter?

Take a second look at your sink

By Isabel Andrew

Have you been altering your skincare routine frequently, but it still isn't making a difference? The answer might be flowing in your tap water!

What's wrong with our water?

Water that flows from your tap may look clear but it may not be as 'clear' as you would think. On top of various minerals, chemicals such as chlorine, aluminium, copper, lead and nitrates are contents found in water too. Their presence help to keep bacteria and algae away.

While these chemicals are helpful in keeping us from falling ill, they can affect our skin health such as attacking the collagen in the skin.

Besides saggy and wrinkled skin, the chlorine in water can cause skin irritations leading to cystic acne, eczema, rashes, and other conditions. To top it off, we do more than wash our faces at the sink. From washing dishes to brushing our teeth and showering, chlorine can heavily alter sensitive skin.

It is a known fact that water is a common cause of health issues among travellers. So if you are constantly moving about, make it a point to always look under your faucet. Do some research on the water situation in the country you're heading to. Your skin and body will thank you.

How can a skincare water filter help?

Most faucet filters leave us with hard water, which carries rust, lead particles, dirt, microplastics and more. Thanks to research and development, we have a solution to that!

Skincare water filters contain carbon fibres and ultra-filtration technologies that can capture these contaminants and give you soft water. Some even come with filters that you can replace every few months.

What else can you do?

Now that you have clean running water for sure, why not use it to the max:

- Store some water in a small bottle and give your face and hair a fresh spritz.
- Brush your teeth with fluoride-free water.
- Keep up with your daily H20 intake.

The incredible discoveries in skincare show that we can now understand and study more skin issues. Nevertheless, it's important to do your own homework and obtain answers from qualified individuals. Enjoy your clean water and clean face!

Sources: Healthline, Dermstore

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TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE 101

A look at one of the world's oldest medical system

By Yasanthi Devi

Many people are now considering holistic treatments that combine modern medicine and traditional remedies. This prompts them to look into ancient practices that have existed in the community since the times of our ancestors such as Traditional Chinese Medicine or TCM.

The way TCM treats patients primarily places greater emphasis on overall health, which distinguishes it from western medicine. However, because of its specialised practices, many people continue to have questions about this old practice.

To provide some background on TCM, we've invited Associate Prof Dr. Lim Ren Jye, Medical Director cum TCM Consultant Physician from Sunway TCM Centre Malaysia to share some insights. We hope this coverage will help you make informed choices in your health journey.

1Twenty80:

WHAT IS TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim Ren Jye:

Traditional Chinese Medicine (also known as TCM) is a medical system originating from China that has been used for thousands of years to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease. It aims to restore the body's balance and harmony between the natural opposing forces of *Yin* and *Yang*, which is based on the belief that *Qi* flows along the meridians in the body and keeps the body and the person's spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health in balance.

1Twenty80:

HOW DOES TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE HELP MODERN MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

Both medicines have their strength, and they can complement each other if it is directed properly by a registered healthcare personnel, especially experts who understand both worlds. My specialty is integrative oncology. I have an example to help explain further.

A patient who has had radiotherapy for nasopharyngeal cancer may experience xerostomia (dry mouth) which badly affects their quality of life. In modern medicine, it is a challenging condition as we have limited options other than artificial saliva. With TCM, herbal medicine helps to alleviate the condition by increasing saliva secretion. We published this study when I was at the National Cancer Institute.

Recently, more and more established areas are being found where TCM and modern medicine are completing each other, for example, post-stroke rehabilitation, pre and post-natal treatments, integrative TCM with fertility treatments, mental health issues, and more.

> TCM IS A MEDICAL SYSTEM ORIGINATING FROM CHINA THAT HAS BEEN USED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS TO PREVENT, DIAGNOSE, AND TREAT DISEASE.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICES THAT FALL UNDER THE CATEGORY OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

Many practices include:

- Herbal medicine
- Acupuncture/Moxibustion/Cupping/*Guasha*
- Nutrition therapy
- Therapeutic Manipulation
- Mind-body-soul intervention (Eg: *Qigong*, *Ba Duan Jing*, and *TaiChi*)

1Twenty80:

HOW EFFECTIVE IS TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

It is often known to have pseudoscience elements due to its diagnostic categories that do not correspond to the current scientific understanding of biology. However, increasing value-based studies and evidence-based studies have shown evidence for the efficacy and safety of TCM.

1Twenty80:

WHO SHOULD USE TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

Generally, anyone can opt to consult a registered TCM practitioner, as TCM is a holistic approach from prevention and treatment to the maintenance of health. Other than treating the symptoms and TCM syndromes, TCM also focuses on prevention, in cases when someone is at the intermediate state between chronic disease and health, we call it suboptimal health status (SHS), a person may have uncomfortable symptoms but without diagnosable illness.

> GENERALLY, ANYONE CAN OPT TO CONSULT A REGISTERED TCM PRACTITIONER, AS TCM IS A HOLISTIC APPROACH FROM PREVENTION AND TREATMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH.

1Twenty80:

WHO SHOULD AVOID TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

Different practices have their contraindications. For example, those who are allergic to herbal medicine are not advised to continue the prescription. Also, those who are taking blood thinners, have pacemakers, are allergic to metal, trypanophobia (extreme fear of needles) should avoid using acupuncture or electro-acupuncture treatment.

1Twenty80:

CAN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE BE USED AS A REPLACEMENT FOR CONVENTIONAL OR ALLOPATHIC TREATMENTS?

Dr. Lim:

Yes and no in this case. In general, it is best to use as a complementary or adjunct treatment for conventional treatments as it does work well in many areas as an integrative method. Usually, in this case, it has been well agreed by all parties on the multidisciplinary approach.

In other cases, upon discussion with medical officers, due to possible age, medical conditions, constraints, or patients with no options for treatments, TCM can play a major role in monitoring the progress.

For example, some cancer patients with no options for treatments left but TCM, they are doing well in our centre, with close monitoring of the progress.

When there are conditions like heart attack, trauma, bleeding gastric ulcer, or other acute and urgent cases, I will request my patients to go to the emergency department for immediate allopathic treatment.

Instead of saying they are alternatives or replacing each other in the healthcare world, they are, in fact, actually complementing each other with their strength whether the patient is with allopathic or TCM.

1Twenty80:

ARE THERE ANY SAFETY CONCERNS ONE SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF BEFORE GOING FOR TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE?

Dr. Lim:

One should understand his or her own medical and medication history before going for Traditional Chinese Medicine. When choosing TCM that would help with your condition, it is best to seek a registered practitioner and TCM centre which focuses highly on effectiveness, quality, and safety.

Do remember to alert the practitioner of your underlying medical condition and medication history. For instance, if you are taking a blood thinner, had surgery, have liver or kidney impairment and so on. With this, your practitioner is able to understand further and provide you with safe options and avoid any herb-drug interactions.

> MY ADVICE IS IF YOU ARE INDECISIVE ABOUT THE AVAILABLE OPTIONS, SEEK SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS BOTH TREATMENTS TO GIVE YOU A SECOND OPINION OR SEEK YOUR PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ON THE ADVICE.

1Twenty80:

HOW CAN SOMEONE LOCATE A TRUSTWORTHY TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE PRACTITIONER?

Dr. Lim:

Malaysia is one of the very few countries to regulate diverse practices and practitioners of TCM. The enforcement of The Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM) Act 2016 provides a good establishment for the council to govern the practice and regulate the practitioners in Malaysia. This will allow Malaysians to recognise and get a consultation from registered practitioners and receive a regulated practice.

1Twenty80:

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS OR ADVICE FOR MALAYSIANS WHO ARE CONSIDERING TCM AND MODERN MEDICINE FOR THE TREATMENT OF THEIR AILMENTS?

Dr. Lim:

Both medicines have their strength, and they can complement each other if it is directed properly by registered healthcare personnel, especially experts who understand both worlds. No doubt, both medicines can provide synergistic effects and give a better outcome if it is prescribed properly. However, they should not be replacing each other unless agreed upon by all parties. Evidence-based and value-based findings are important in ensuring effectiveness, quality, and safety in terms of considering both treatments.

In some cases, TCM should not be an alternative to delay modern medicine. For instance, in cancer management, there are many treatments available with good outcomes especially when it is treated early. On the other hand, some established outcomes such as TCM stroke rehabilitation should be started as soon as the western treatments are done. A combination of acupuncture and physiotherapy does make difference in terms of recovery.

My advice is if you are indecisive about the available options, seek someone who understands both treatments to give you a second opinion or seek your primary healthcare provider on the advice. ■

Which chocolate is healthier?

Going loco for cocoa, healthily!

By Isabel Andrew

Another reason to save the planet - it's the only one with chocolates! Chocolates have millions if not billions of fans worldwide. Yet it's always perceived as an unhealthy treat that should be indulged in the dark. Let's investigate this stereotype and find a healthy kind of cocoa.

Dark chocolate

- **COCOA:** at least 35%.
- **OTHERS:** 65% of cocoa butter, sugar, milk, emulsifiers, vanilla or other flavourings.
- **RECOMMENDATIONS:** The darker the better!
  - Eat those with higher cocoa content — 70% to 85%.
  - Avoid fillings unless they are nuts or dried or fresh fruits.
  - A little goes a long way, so enjoy no more than ⅓ of the bar and then go sweat it out.

White chocolate

- **COCOA:** 20% or more of cocoa butter (the natural fat of the cocoa bean).
- **OTHERS:** 55% of sugar, milk solids, lecithin, vanilla and other flavourings.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Avoid or eat in very limited amounts!

Milk chocolate

- **COCOA:** at least 10% of cocoa and at least 12% dry milk solids.
- **OTHERS:** 78% of cocoa butter, sugar, emulsifiers, vanilla or other flavourings.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Eat in limited amounts because of the sugars and fats in it.

The winner is... Dark Chocolate!

Because dark chocolates are the least processed, so they contain the highest percentage of flavonoid-filled cocoa beans. This aids the heart by:

- Controlling cholesterol.
- Reducing the risk of blood clots.
- Improving blood flow to vital organs.
- Lowering blood pressure.
- Inhibiting sticky platelets.

Chocolates with over 70% cocoa pack the best punch for your health. But don't get carried away! Keep it on the low because 100g of dark chocolate comes with 500 calories! So, have we changed your mind about the tiny brown square?

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, WebMD, Hopkins Medicine, MyHealth, Healthline

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4 Environmentally Savvy Destinations

A look at eco-friendly nations

By Yasanthi Devi

People are looking for ways to travel more responsibly so they can do something to help preserve our planet. It looks like the pandemic has only accelerated this trend, especially as demand for travel increases.

This increasing curiosity is accompanied by a desire to travel to eco-friendly countries and develop a sustainable itinerary. If you're in the same boat, check out these 4 eco-friendly places for your next vacation!

#1

ICELAND

Due to its distinctive geological setting, Iceland has also been referred to as "The land of Ice and Fire." The island's geothermal systems are powered by the highly active volcanic zone of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, which connects the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. Thanks to Iceland's advantageous location, Icelanders now have extensive access to renewable energy.

Moreover, the country is overrun by glaciers with glacier coverage amounting to more than 11%. As the glaciers melt seasonally, it helps with hydropower generation. These seasonal melts trickle down from the glacial mountains, rivers, and seas, enabling Iceland's hydropower resources.

To date, Iceland's economy is currently largely supported by geothermal and hydropower. These resources aid in supplying homes and energy-intensive industries with electricity and heat. For example, the majority of Reykjavik's (a city in Iceland) electricity and heating comes from geothermal and hydroelectric sources.

HERE'S A FUN FACT: Reykjavik is also among the world's greenest and cleanest cities!

#2 FINLAND

Finland is often lauded for its progressive thinking in environmental policies and sustainable developments. This can be seen when Finland pledged its commitment to become carbon neutral by 2035. Additionally, the Finnish strategy also envisions 250,000 electric vehicles (10% of the total number of automobiles in the nation) on Finnish roads by 2030.

Since enacting a carbon tax in 1990, which was the first country to do so, Finland's greenhouse gas emissions have significantly decreased. The largest lake district in all of Europe is also located in Finland, leading Finland to also be referred to as the Land of a Thousand Lakes. Known as Lahti Lakeland, the Finns travel here to unwind and get back in touch with nature.The Lakeland is a maze of interconnected forests, lakes, and islands that form ridges and pathways leading to hidden lagoons.

You can also visit the Finnish Laplands which are rich in contrasts and home to rare natural phenomena like the Northern Lights, Polar Nights and more! Finland has made it a point to emphasise on eco-tourism with many tour organisers offering safaris and activities specially curated for eco-conscious travellers.

#3 NEW ZEALAND

With a population of five million, New Zealand is a melting pot of cultures with a history that blends Mauri, European, Pacific Island, and Asian influences. Together, the vibrant people of New Zealand work hand-in-hand to uphold their commitment for a sustainable future.

This can be seen when New Zealand is thought to produce just 0.2 percent of the world's total greenhouse emission. New Zealand was also one of the first countries to pledge a carbon-neutral future. Companies and industries in New Zealand are also striving to achieve Carbon Zero certification in which companies accurately measure and take action to reduce their carbon footprint.

Furthermore, New Zealand is also gifted with colourful terrains, mesmerising beaches, and a good climate with exciting flora and fauna species. These unique features often attract the attention from tourists all around the world. Hence, the Kiwis have made it a point to focus on ecotourism where all stakeholders work together to reduce the negative impacts on the surrounding environment.

Additionally, some areas in New Zealand have also started implementing geothermal power. In 2017, it is estimated that over 17% of all the electricity produced, were generated from geothermal energy.

#4 NORWAY

Norway is ahead of its time with its pioneering progressive sustainable changes nationwide. Norway tops the list for its contribution towards a better climate and planet as a whole.

Similar to other eco-conscious countries, Norway has also pledged to be climate neutral by 2030. Apart from that, the people of Norway also hold the record for the highest number of electric car adoption in the world.

The Nordics have also passionately embraced the concept of *friluftsliv* which translates to “open-air living”. In the spirit of *friluftsliv*, people in Norway alongside other Nordic countries unwind in the open air after a particularly tough time or just for the sole purpose of relaxing. It’s the ultimate love confession for the outdoors.

The people of Norway explore the outdoors and venture out into various terrains to achieve bliss. The sight of calm blue waters or lush greeneries aid in maintaining the spiritual and physical well-being of the Norwegians. Outdoor activities such as camping and hiking are crowd favourite activities.

If you’re looking to incorporate green elements in your travel plans, we’re rooting for you! It’s always good to be an eco-conscious traveller and to go green whenever we can. Happy travelling!

Source: Euro News, Visit Lahti, This Is Finland, United Nations’ Sustainable Development Website, Visit Laplands, Visit Finland, Visit Iceland, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment New Zealand, Newzealand.com, Tourism Industry ATEAROA, Visit Norway, BBC

GREEN TRAVELLING TIPS

#1

Try to use public modes of transportation such as bus, trains or other forms of rail system.

#2

If you're thinking of renting a car, try to opt for a hybrid car or an electric car.

#3

If you're visiting a small town and looking to commute, you can try cycling around town.

#4

Take a shower instead of a bath.

#5

When leaving the hotel or your place of accommodation, remember to turn off the switches and unplug any electrical appliances.

#6

Support local sustainable businesses and entrepreneurs.

#7

Avoid single-use plastics and carry your own stainless steel cutlery to avoid using plastic cutlery.

#8

Choose sustainable accommodations if you have the option to choose. ■

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AVOCADO:

THE RICH, CREAMY FRUIT

The many ways to use avocado in a recipe

By Ridzvaani Nagarajen

Avocado smoothie

Creamy avocado dressing

From breakfast to dessert, avocado is a fruit that has a diverse culinary application. Due to its stellar nutrient contents, avocado has gained popularity among countless people around the world.

We commonly know that avocados are used in making guacamole or sliced up on toast. However, there are numerous ways you can use avocados. In this issue, we would love to share two amazing avocado recipes that you would relish for sure. Plus they're super healthy and can be eaten as a dessert, spread, dressing or as a pre or post-workout meal.

Check out the recipes below and do give them a try!

AVOCADO SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS

½ Large	Avocado
1½ cups	Cold milk of your choice
1 tsp	Pure vanilla extract
2 tbsp	Honey
⅛ tsp	Salt
¼ cup	Fresh or frozen blueberries
1 cup	Fresh or frozen strawberries
1 scoop	Protein powder, optional

METHOD

1. Peel the avocado and discard the pit.
2. Add all the ingredients in a pitcher.
3. Blend until smooth.
4. Taste, then add more honey if needed.
5. Serve immediately.

AVOCADO TIP:

For extra flavourings, drizzle some chocolate or caramel sauce around the edge of the cup before pouring in the avocado smoothie.

Sources: Eating Well, Renee Nicole's Kitchen.

CREAMY AVOCADO DRESSING

The best substitute to mayonnaise

INGREDIENTS

½ cup	Ripe avocado, smush into cup to measure or estimate ½ medium avocado
3 tbsp	Olive or extra virgin olive oil
3 tbsp	Sour cream (you can substitute with Greek or plain, unsweetened yoghourt)
2 tbsp	Lemon juice, freshly squeezed
1 clove	Garlic, peeled
¼ cup	Water (add more if needed)
½ tsp	Kosher salt
¼ tsp	Black pepper

METHOD

1. In a food processor or blender, add the peeled garlic, avocado, freshly squeezed lemon juice, olive oil, salt and black pepper.
2. Process until smooth. Be sure to scrape the side down a few times to ensure there are no lumps.
3. Thin the salad dressing out with ¼ cup of water. You may add a little extra water until it reaches the desired consistency.
4. Keep in an airtight container and place it in the refrigerator.
5. Enjoy the salad dressing!

SPICING IT UP

Take your avocado dressing up a notch by adding some base flavour such as these:

FRESH HERBS:

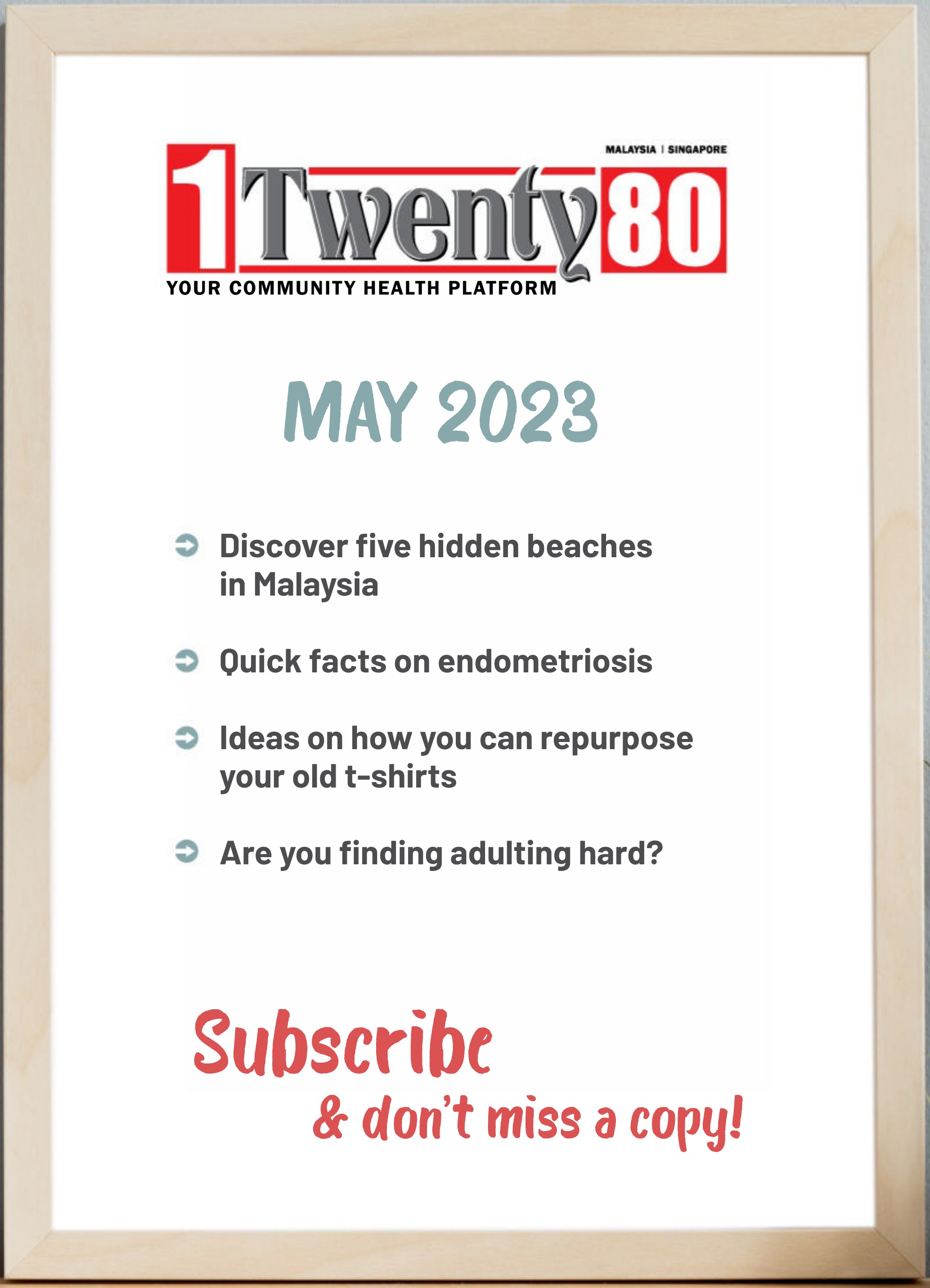
¼ cup chopped parsley, dill, coriander or cilantro

GREEK STYLE:

The perfect use for Greek Salad!
2 tsp dried oregano
Extra squeeze of lemon

RANCH:

¼ tsp	Dried dill
¼ tsp	Parsley
¼ tsp	Chives
¼ tsp	Onion powder
¼ tsp	Garlic powder
¼ tsp	Black pepper
½ tsp	Salt
½ tsp	White sugar



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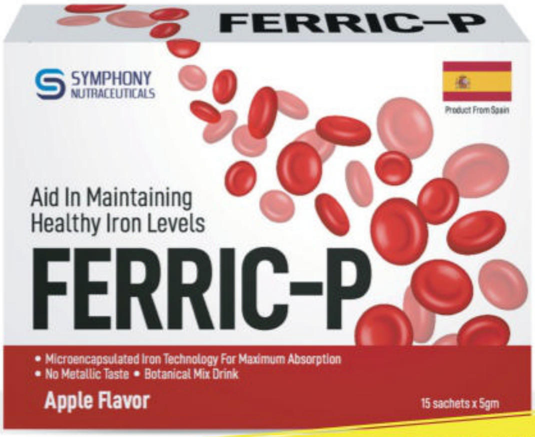
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Ferrous Fumarate - Uses, Side Effects and More (2022). WebMD. https://www.webmd.com/drugs/2/drug-4129/ferrous-fumarate-oral/details
Synder, C. (2021 January 5). Ferrous Sulfate: Benefits, Uses, Side Effects, and More Healthline. https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/ferrous-sulfate#bottom-line

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